DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 265 SO 021 391

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TITLE Seeking and Tapping New Resources for Education: A Welsh Case Study.
INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). Div. of Educational Policy and Planning.
REPORT NO ED-90/CPA-401/DP.4/9
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 12p.; A paper presented at the UNESCO International Congress on Planning and Management of Educational Development (Mexico City, Mexico, March 26-30, 1990).
AVAILABLE FROM United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Curriculum Development; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; *Educational Administration; Educational Change; Educational Development; Educational Planning; *Educational Policy; *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; International Education; *International Studies; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS UNESCO; *Wales

ABSTRACT

Based on research, this report proposes curriculum innovation be used to explore the feasibility of improving and extending educational provision through utilizing the resources of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The curriculum innovation in question is the dissemination of Development Education (DE) through Welsh teacher education. Three hypotheses are formulated based on the increased use of the resources of the NGOs in the formal sector of education. The first hypothesis is that pre-service teacher education is a potentially rich area for the promotion of innovation in the curriculum. The second hypothesis is that NGOs and similar organizations could play a significant role in the promotion of educational innovation in the formal sector of education. The third hypothesis is that NGO educational activity could promote the less overt and less popular aspects of government policy. A list of 11 references is included. (DB)

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SEEKING AND TAPPING NEW RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION A WELSH CASE STUDY

A.G. HOPKIN

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
"PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT"
(Mexico, 26-30 March 1990)

SEEKING AND TAPPING NEW RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION

A WELSH CASE STUDY

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SEEKING AND TAPPING NEW RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION: A WELSH CASE STUDY

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In this paper it is proposed to use a curriculum innovation to explore the feasibility of improving and extending educational provision through utilising the resources of Non Government Organisations (NGOs). The curriculum innovation in question is the dissemination of Development Education (DE) through teacher education. The context of the case study is teacher education in Wales. Whilst there are a number of NGOs involved the principal ones considered are Christian Aid, Oxfam, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), and Quaker Peace and Service. It is proposed to provide a descriptive analysis of the research and development project upon which this paper is based, but this, and the actual findings to date, will be used to propose a series of hypotheses. These hypotheses will relate to the increased use of the resources of the NGOs in the formal sector of education.

DE is a minority element in the curriculum in schools in England and Wales, but its presence is tangible in a variety of forms. For the purpose of this paper it is understood to be that part of the curriculum which helps young people become more aware of the nature and causes of development and under-development in both the global and national sense, and of world interdependence. Whilst concerned with developing countries and the international dimension, it is equally concerned with the plight of the disadvantaged both at home and abroad. At present, given the very real state of change and turmoil which characterises the education system in England and Wales at present (Economist 3/12/1988), there would seem to be little prospect that DE as a dimension could hope to survive, let alone flourish. Indeed, there is no mention of it as a subject in the new national curriculum that is being drawn up. However, the present writer has argued that both the national curriculum and the criteria for the new General Certificate of Secondary Education examination provide ample scope for any teacher who wishes to introduce DE into his or her teaching (Hopkin 1989).

In practice the British Government has a woeful record in respect to its formal and financial commitment to DE (Continuing Committee 1987). The buck has been passed to the NGOs who have established themselves as the principal benefactors in the promotion of this dimension of education, to the tune of nearly three million pounds in 1985 (Arnold 1988 p.9).In spite of the tensions within the organisations, particularly Oxfam, as to whether monies should be diverted from aid work abroad to education at home, this support for DE has been sustained (Education Network 1988).How effective this commitment is in quantifiable terms is a matter of conjecture: what is patent is that without this commitment on the part of the NGOs DE would have withered away as a dimension of the curriculum in British schools. However, it has been and is the view of the writer that the resources of the NGOs could be more effectively deployed and used as a multiplier in the formal system so that DE could become more substantive as a dimension in the curicula of British schools. The project whereby the writer attempted to vindicate this conviction will be described and evaluated below and this will be used to postulate guidelines as to how the resources of the NGOs can be exploited to promote more effective development and change in formal education.

Perhaps the first issue that should be addressed is whether it is valid to treat Wales as a case study. A part of the United Kingdom, it is a small metropolitan country with a population of two and a half million people and is still, in practice, dominated culturally and politically by her senior partner, England. A convincing case could be made that Wales is one of England's few remaining colonies (Elis-Thomas 1989). It is a country with patches of development and underdevelopment; language and cultural issues continue to dominate the political arena in Wales with the indigenous element very much on the defensive in the face of metropolitan encroachment; there are issues existing in relation to ethnic minorities; and the economic and political relationship between the Principality of Wales and her 'partners' is the subject of continuing controversy. It is hoped that the above will suffice to demonstrate that Wales has much in common with the so called 'developing' countries and that much of her political , cultural, and economic experience is similar to that of many other countries: on these grounds the Welsh experience is relevant to the developing world.

There are other grounds which justify using Wales as a case study. The 'smallness' of Wales has been referred to. What is too often forgotten is that as a Commonwealth country Wales has a population that is greater than most other member countries: if Wales were a member of the United Nations there would probably currently be more countries with fewer people than Wales. A further advantage of using Wales as a case study is that it is

comprehensive and, like most countries and even regions in the world, it can be perceived or conceptualised as a unit. This is not easy in the case of a country such as Indonesia or even the United Kingdom . In practical terms the federal nature of the University of Wales, and educational institutions such as the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the Welsh Inspectorate, ensure that there is a network of personal and professional relationships that facilitates the undertaking of research and development that is the subject of this paper. Further reference will be made below to how these factors, which legitimise the use of Wales as a case study, also substantiate the argument for using countries or regions such as Wales as case studies for research and development in education with a view to replication.

The research and development project under review is financed by the Christian Aid Development Education Committee for Wales and the Rowntree Trust and is being conducted over two years (Christian Aid 1989). There are a number of aims and objectives in respect to the project. The overall aims are: (1) to establish the feasibility of further promoting Development Education in schools through pre-service teacher education in Wales; and (2) to establish a strategy whereby the resources of the NGOs working in Wales could be utilised to promote Development Education through pre-service teacher education. To achieve these aims a number of operational objectives have been identified. The first is to establish the perceived and actual status of Development Education in the courses provided by the four university and six public sector teacher training institutions in Wales. A second objective is to establish the stances of the NGOs and the resources that they have available that can be included as Development Education elements in teacher education. A third objective is to provide a forum whereby representatives from the NGOs and the teacher education institutions can meet together to consider the findings of the research and to develop a joint strategy if this is thought to be appropriate and desirable. It is planned that this forum will take the form of a two-day residential seminar, and the preliminary findings will form the basis of the discussions. The final report will incorporate the findings, the proceedings of the seminar, and any recommendations made (or programmes decided upon) at the seminar.

In general the stance of the teacher education institutions in Wales towards DE has been non-committal. Whilst there has been little apparent overt commitment to this area of the curriculum, elements of it can be discerned in the programmes that are mounted. At the University College School of Education in Cardiff there has been a DE option available at the master's level for the last ten years. It is available as an option in the B.Ed. programme of the South Glamorgan Institute of

Higher Education. The Gwent College of Higher Education has a very strong Environmental Education component in its teacher training provision. At the North East Wales Institute there is a primary curriculum project which incorporates DE. At the University School of Education in Bangor there is an attached self funding unit that is very active in this field. Individuals working at the Centre for Development Studies in the Swansea University College have also become involved in DE in the school curriculum. However, in the last three institutions the link between those involved in DE and teacher education is either peripheral or non existent. In short the role of DE in teacher education to date has been minimal and primarily dependent upon the interest and commitment of individuals working in these institutions.

On the other hand the work and activities of a variety of NGOs have ensured that DE has maintained a presence in both formal and non-formal education in Wales. As a result of the initiative of the CEWC/CYMRU executive committee a two year Fellowship was established at the University Department of Education and this led to the dissemination of more effective practices in schools and the publication of a DE handbook (Heard 1985 A). The same committee was also responsible for promoting DE as a public examination offered at the upper secondary level, one that remains the only one of its kind in the United Kingdom (Heard 1985 B). More recently the Christian Aid Development Education Funding Committee for Wales has been disbursing funds in support of various DE projects. The sum- about £16,000.00 per annum- is relatively small, but it has meant that this dimension has been further promoted over a wider range, notably in the non-formal sector. The leading organisations in this field in Wales have been Christian Aid and OXFAM and each has an education officer for Wales who is particularly committed to the promotion of DE. In practice the approach to date has been an ad hoc one, and little impact has been made in the field of teacher education. It was this latter state of affairs that prompted the writer to initiate the project under discussion. Furthermore, the opinions expressed to the writer by officials working for the NGOs made it clear that the latter would be sympathetic to the adoption of an approach to the promotion of DE that would have a multiplier effect. Incorporating DE in pre-service teacher education was perceived as a means of prosecuting such an approach.

The first stage of the project involved the distribution and collection of the questionnaires and the interviewing of staff and students in the ten teacher training institutions. The interviews have provided interesting and illuminating preliminary insights into the status of DE in teacher education in Wales. The initial impression has been that whilst the presence of DE in the programmes may not be overt to an outsider, there does appear to be a genuine awareness that such a dimension is currently

highly desirable both in schools and in teacher education programmes. Whilst there has been much stress on the institutional barriers that have hampered its inclusion, and which may well continue to do so, there has been considerable support given to the idea that the means and will need to be found to ensure that it will be incorporated in the future. Further analysis of the data should give useful pointers as to how this can be done. Another preliminary finding is a rather disturbing one. It does appear that a case could be made out that there is a very real educational generation gap between those who train and those who are being trained. This is disturbing because there are matters that are of real concern to the students in training which are not so to their mentors. This is particularly the case in respect to the areas that DE is concerned with and one must ask whether those undergoing teacher education in Wales are being prepared to spend most of their working lives in the twenty-first century. DE is essentially 'tomorrow orientated': is this the case with teacher education? Another matter of concern to this writer, in respect to the preliminary findings, is that there appeared to be a very real gap in terms of the perception of what was being provided. Individual members of staff in a number of institutions made it clear that there were elements of DE in the programmes they provided. This was not confirmed by the students. This could have been a problem with respect to nomenclature or conceptualisation but further analysis will be needed before any conclusions can be arrived at. What was strongly evident in the interviews was the positive perceptions of the NGOs and their work on the part of students and staff and the willingness to consider involving them in pre-service teacher education. In this the survey to date has been very positive: the consensus is that they should be involved.

The research involved in the project to date has facilitated the formulation of a number of tentative hypotheses. The first is that pre-service teacher education is a potentially rich area for the promotion of innovation in the curriculum. This might seem to be a truism but this form of education is traditional and conservative and normally reflects the status quo. A paper presented at a Conference in Bali (Verspoor and Leno 1985) suggested that this area does have potential but that this is too often neglected. The preliminary findings of the project under discussion confirm this. Far more innovative teacher preparation work needs to be done in teacher education institutions if the validity of this hypothesis is to be established or otherwise.

A second hypothesis is that the NGOs and similar organisations could play a significant role in the promotion of educational innovation in the formal sector of education. These would necessarily have to be areas of the curriculum to which the organisations are committed.

The application of resources, in the form of funds and materials, and personnel, in the form of individuals with specific expertise, experience and commitment, could have a multiplier effect out of all scale to the size of the input. What must be borne in mind, in both developed and developing countries, is that the formal sector does not have a monopoly of the resources that could be used in teacher education.

A corollary to this is that NGOs in developing countries could partly fulfil the innovatory role in education played by the private sector in many developed countries. In general the private schools and institutions in developing countries supplement government provision in respect to formal education. On the other hand, for example in the United Kingdom, the role is a complementary one, and many valuable innovations and educational advances have been made through activity generated in the private sector. This dimension has, understandably, been wanting in the poorer and less developed countries: the NGOs may have a valuable role to play in this field.

The third hypothesis is that NGO educational activity could promote the less overt and less popular aspects of government policy. There is an element of paradox in this. It has been noted above that DE, and what it incorporates, could be promoted through the national curriculum and the examination system in the United kingdom if the will to do so was there on the part of teachers. It has been argued that the NGOs have a part to play in this, and that the will to do so could be instilled through teacher education. In many developing countries there are aspects of policy to which the government may be committed, such as the diminution of tribalism, the promotion of inter-cultural understanding, the training of teachers from minority ethnic groups, but to which the teacher education system pays little attention in practical terms, possibly because of institutional inertia. These are possible areas for the involvement of the NGOs on terms acceptable to the governments and to the institutions. If the latter were to determine the conditions whereby NGOs were to be involved then the institutions might be responsive to such practice and take advantage of the opportunities afforded to extend the range of their activities.

It is also hypothesised that the assessment as to whether innovative qualitative change can be effected through teacher education institutions is best undertaken by individuals or groups not directly involved in what is proposed. In the case under review the institutions themselves have too much invested in the status quo, and are too constrained by their relationships with the local and central government, to be able to generate the will and energy to take on board significant innovations. But this situation is universal, and notably so in respect to

developing countries. It cannot be expected that the will to innovate and change will come from nominally 'neutral' bodies, such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The latter, and this is characteristic of such organisations, have briefs and inevitably represent certain vested interests, knowingly and unknowingly. This is increasingly the case in the United Kingdom (Holt 1897). If innovative change is to take place in institutional policy and practice the impetus to do so is unlikely to come from those currently most concerned in and with teacher education. The type of institutional review that is needed is for those undertaking it to be informed but not strongly committed to any particular stance.

A number of hypotheses have emerged that are of a more general nature. One is that the NGOs represent a resource that could be exploited thereby extending educational provision in developing countries. Such a strategy would be by no means an innovating one. For example, it was British colonial policy to extend educational provision through involving non-government and community groups in the provision of school places through a system of grants in aid of education. This pattern of partnership must partly be the reason for the markedly higher literacy and school enrolment rates in Anglophone in contrast to Francophone Africa ((Hinchliffe 1987 p.7) where this practice was not nearly so prevalent.

NGOs and their resources can be effectively deployed in the promotion of educational innovation. This would be best effected where the policies in question may reflect conceptual innovations, such as in the fields of moral education or the treatment of ethnic groups, which might be difficult to promote in 'mainstream' educational provision. In any case, the policy and practice of the NGOs in question would have to be in accord with the ideological principles and practices involved.

A third generalised hypothesis that suggests itself is that educational innovation, experimentation and development is best undertaken through relatively small scale projects. In the case under discussion it has been argued that the comprehensive nature of Wales has facilitated the prosecution of the project. Further advantages have been the commitment of institutions involved that have derived from such items as commonality, the existence of personal and institutional networks, and the presence of NGOs active in the field of education. These factors are not generally found on a nation-wide basis in larger countries. However, they may exist on a regional basis. Furthermore, there are ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic and regional differences in Wales that do mirror those in bigger countries. It is difficult to undertake innovative change and development on a country-wide scale in the latter. Projects undertaken in smaller countries or on a regional basis lend themselves to adaptation and replication: this needs

to be borne in mind by both governments and donor agencies.

It has been argued in this paper that 'developing' countries can learn from the recent and current experiences of metropolitan countries. What has also become patent to the writer is that the term 'developing' country is increasingly meaningless in respect to the treatment of comparative educational issues. In practice in educational terms all countries are developing. This, above all, makes Wales a suitable case for treatment.

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